

## **Response to Tony Mitchell from Cllr Charles Gerrish – Cabinet Member for Finance and Efficiency.**

At the Keynsham Area Forum Meeting on 30th April 2018 Tony Mitchell from Transition Keynsham read a statement on the Council's budget challenges and requested it be incorporated in the record of the Forum's proceedings. The statement is as follows:

*"Transition Keynsham is very disappointed that the Council is being forced to make £15 – £16 million of further cuts by 2020, with 300 employees losing their jobs.*

*We are pleased that the Council believes that this can be done 'while protecting and caring for our most vulnerable, nurturing residents' health, safety and well-being and providing ways for everyone in the community to reach their full potential'.*

*We note that the Council 'will be putting our case to Government to recognise the unprecedented challenges that we face'. We fully support that and look forward to it being pursued vigorously.*

*We would hope that it would include, inter alia, a call for a re-alignment in priorities in public spending at national level, with a rigorous examination of current expenditures, a crackdown on wasteful projects such as PFI and agency staffing and a review of Council Tax, to ensure fairer rewards for all.*

*We cannot continue to just accept the continuation of policies which are so destructive of our community fabric and forcing councils across the country into impossible situations."*

A response to this was requested for the July 2018 meeting on the outcome of the Council's engagement with the Government and the Local Government's Association's view. The response is as follows:

*Bath & North East Somerset Council has made a detailed and vigorous response to the Fair Funding Review, using the feedback we have received at our Area Forums including the Keynsham Area Forum. It is important to stress that this is not simply about asking for more money from central government, although we have of course emphasised the need for proper funding for "new burdens" and other pressures on the Council, particularly around social care. For example, our requests for change include allowing local authorities to introduce some form of Local Tourism Levy, which we could raise and invest locally. We have also highlighted the pressures created by the expansion of our Universities and by the growth of short-term lettings such as AIRBNB.*

*The aim is that these and other changes to central government regulations would allow us to become self-sufficient, and not dependent on central government funding decisions.*

*The Leader of the Council has taken the opportunity to raise these and other issues directly with Government Ministers, and we have also of course been working closely with the Local Government Association (LGA) who have recently produced a useful report called "Moving the Conversation On", which can be found at this link <https://www.local.gov.uk/moving-conversation/narrative>*

*We are also working closely with the LGA to bring together towns and cities which - like us - have seen the impact of the expansion of Universities without receiving the income needed to address them.*